

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 1 and amend claims 2, 4, 8, and 10 to 14 as follows (pursuant to revised 37 CFR 1.121, a complete claim listing is provided below):

Claim 1. (Canceled).

1           2. (Currently Amended) A hand-held tool for piercing and scraping, comprising:  
2           a handle;  
3           a wedge-shaped blade protruding from the handle, said blade having a pointed  
4           end for piercing and an edge for scraping; and  
5           a removable flexible cap that fits over the wedge-shaped blade to protect and keep  
6           the blade clean;  
7           ~~The hand-held tool according to claim 1;~~ wherein said handle comprises a hollow  
8           body with an interior space that receives and holds the cap when the blade is being used  
9           for piercing or scraping.

1           3. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 2, wherein said handle  
2           further comprises at least one rib protruding into said interior space for squeezing and  
3           holding the cap in place.

1           4. (Currently Amended) The hand-held tool according to claim 2 ~~1~~, wherein said

2     ~~handle comprises~~ a hollow body comprises ~~having~~ front and rear ends, top and bottom  
3     sides, and left and right sides, the bottom side being substantially open so that said an  
4     interior space of the hollow body can be used to receive and store the cap when the blade  
5     is being used.

1            5. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 4, further comprising a pair  
2     of centering ribs protruding from each of the right and left sides into the interior space of  
3     the hollow body for squeezing and holding the cap in place.

1            6. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 5, further comprising a pair  
2     of cross ribs protruding from the top side into the interior space of the hollow body, said  
3     cross ribs each providing a fulcrum about which the cap can be pivoted to raise an end  
4     thereof to facilitate removal of the cap from the interior space of the hollow body.

1            7. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 4, wherein said wedge-  
2     shaped blade protrudes from one of said front and rear ends of the hollow body.

1            8. (Currently Amended) The hand-held tool according to claim 2 ~~†~~, wherein said  
2     wedge-shaped blade further ~~further~~ comprises a substantially flat thumb-rest portion  
3     located between the pointed end and the handle, said thumb-rest portion being arranged  
4     such that a user's thumb can be conveniently pressed against the thumb-rest portion,

5       when the handle is held in the palm of the user's hand, to grip and tear away packaging  
6       after piercing with the pointed end of the blade.

1           9. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 8, wherein said thumb-rest  
2       portion has a shallow depression formed therein for aiding in the removal of pills from a  
3       blister-type package.

1           10. (Currently Amended) The hand-held tool according to claim 2 ~~+~~, wherein  
2       said handle has a length that fits comfortably within a user's hand, and said wedge-  
3       shaped blade is shorter in length than said handle.

1           11. (Currently Amended) The hand-held tool according to claim 2 ~~+~~, wherein  
2       said edge for scraping comprises a generally straight first portion closest to the handle  
3       that extends approximately parallel to a longitudinal axis of the handle, an arcuate second  
4       portion adjacent to the first portion, and a generally straight third portion extending  
5       between the arcuate second portion and the pointed end.

1           12. (Currently Amended) A hand-held tool for piercing and scraping,  
2       comprising:  
3           a handle;  
4           a wedge-shaped blade protruding from the handle, said blade having a pointed

5     end for piercing and an edge for scraping; and  
6             a removable flexible cap that fits over the wedge-shaped blade to protect and keep  
7     the blade clean;  
8             wherein said edge for scraping comprises a generally straight first portion closest  
9     to the handle that extends approximately parallel to a longitudinal axis of the handle, an  
10    arcuate second portion adjacent to the first portion, and a generally straight third portion  
11   extending between the arcuate second portion and the pointed end; and

12            ~~The hand-held tool according to claim 11,~~ wherein said third portion of the edge  
13    for scraping extends at an obtuse angle relative to said first portion of the edge, and said  
14    arcuate second portion of the edge provides a continuous transition from the first portion  
15    to the third portion.

1            13. (Currently Amended) A hand-held tool for piercing and scraping,  
2    comprising:  
3            a handle;  
4            a wedge-shaped blade protruding from the handle, said blade having a pointed  
5    end for piercing and an edge for scraping; and  
6            a removable flexible cap that fits over the wedge-shaped blade to protect and keep  
7    the blade clean;

8            ~~The hand-held tool according to claim 1,~~ wherein said blade comprises a rounded  
9    portion disposed between said handle and said edge, said rounded portion providing a

10 surface for receiving said cap over said blade with a snug slip fit therebetween.

1 14. (Currently Amended) The hand-held tool according to claim 2 ~~+~~, wherein  
2 said handle has a lowered step at a rear end thereof, and a hole extending through said  
3 lowered step for hanging the tool.

1 15. (Original) A hand-held tool, comprising:  
2 a handle comprising a hollow body having a generally rectangular block-shaped  
3 configuration with front and rear ends, top and bottom sides, and left and right sides, the  
4 bottom side being substantially open to reveal an interior space of the hollow body, said  
5 handle being sized to fit comfortably within a user's hand;  
6 a blade protruding from the front end of the handle, said blade having a rounded  
7 portion adjacent to the front end of the handle, a flat thumb-rest portion protruding from  
8 the rounded portion, a scraper edge extending along at least a portion of an outer  
9 periphery of the flat thumb-rest portion, and a pointed end formed at a front tip of the  
10 blade, said thumb-rest portion being arranged such that a user's thumb can be pressed  
11 against the thumb-rest portion, when the handle is held in the palm of the user's hand, to  
12 grip and tear away packaging after piercing with the pointed end of the blade, and said  
13 blade being shorter in length than said handle; and  
14 a removable flexible cap that fits over the blade to protect and keep the blade  
15 clean, said cap having an inner dimension that fits snugly over the rounded portion of the

16 blade, and said cap having an outer dimension that fits snugly within the interior space of  
17 the hollow body.

1 16. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, further comprising a  
2 pair of centering ribs protruding from each of the right and left sides of the hollow body  
3 into the interior space for squeezing and holding the cap in place.

1 17. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said centering  
2 ribs taper in a direction from said bottom side toward said top side so as to form a  
3 progressively narrower opening between the centering ribs for squeezing and holding the  
4 cap in place.

1 18. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, further comprising a  
2 pair of cross ribs protruding from the top side of the hollow body into the interior space,  
3 said cross ribs each providing a fulcrum about which the cap can be pivoted to raise an  
4 end thereof to facilitate removal of the cap from the interior space of the hollow body.

1 19. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said thumb-  
2 rest portion has a shallow depression formed therein for aiding in the removal of pills  
3 from a blister-type package.

1           20. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said scraping  
2       edge comprises a generally straight first portion adjacent to the rounded portion, said first  
3       portion extending approximately parallel to a longitudinal axis of the handle, an arcuate  
4       second portion adjacent to the first portion, and a generally straight third portion  
5       extending between the arcuate second portion and the pointed end.

1           21. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 20, wherein said third  
2       portion of the scraping edge extends at an obtuse angle relative to said first portion of the  
3       scraping edge, and said arcuate second portion of the scraping edge provides a  
4       continuous transition from the first portion to the third portion.

1           22. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 21, wherein said third  
2       portion of the scraping edge is bordered on one side by said thumb-rest portion and on  
3       another side by a flat edge which is angled back slightly from perpendicular to the  
4       thumb-rest portion.

1           23. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 21, wherein a spherical  
2       portion is disposed between a front end of the rounded portion and said thumb-rest  
3       portion to keep the blade from protruding too far into a package pierced by the blade.

1           24. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said handle has

2 a lowered step at the rear end thereof, and a hole extending through said lowered step for  
3 hanging the tool.

1 25. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said top side  
2 has a raised logo area formed thereon for printing visual indicia on said tool.

1 26. (Original) The hand-held tool according to claim 15, wherein said handle  
2 and blade are integrally molded from a plastic material.